

SECRET

JUL 27 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*Ad 10*

SUBJECT: Ferenc VAJTA

1. Subject, whose real name is reportedly VICSEK, was born at Debrecen, Hungary, in 1914. He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and at Geneva, and later spent several years in Rome as correspondent of the Hungarian paper "Uj Magyarasag" until expelled in 1941 for his criticism of the Italian Army. While in Italy, subject was in the service of both the Hungarian Intelligence Service and the German Abwehr. It was also reported that he worked at unspecified dates for the Hungarian Intelligence Service in Belgrade and Istanbul. In 1941-42 he was the Berlin correspondent of "Uj Magyarasag" and Cultural Attache for the Hungarian Legation in Berlin. Returning to Budapest in 1943, he founded and edited the pro-Nazi weekly "Az Orszag". At this time he was described as "a creature of MECSEK and ANTAL", two of the principal political agents for the Germans in Hungary. His task in this capacity was to destroy pro-American and pro-British sympathy among the upper and middle class readers of "Az Orszag"; his comments were often verbatim translations of official German propaganda. He made scurrilous attacks on the President of the United States and other Western leaders. He was a member of the Hungarian Nazi Ferenc SZALASI's Arrow Cross Party and when SZALASI seized power in 1944, VAJTA was appointed Hungarian Consul General in Vienna. At the beginning of the siege of Vienna, he decamped with the consulate funds and the valuables of his staff. When later arrested by the Americans, some of the stolen property was discovered in his possession. It was also reported that subject was responsible for the deaths of grounded United States Air Force personnel and that until 1945 he had demanded death by hanging of captured American pilots through his paper "Az Orszag".

2. By the Allied Governments' definition of war crimes, he fell into the automatic arrest category and was taken into custody by OSS on 7 June 1945. He was subsequently released to the 7th Army custody. A few weeks after his arrest, he escaped into the French Zone where he worked himself into the good graces of the French authorities by revealing the burial place of several thousand kilograms of gold and diamonds. Following this he obtained employment with the French Intelligence Service in Innsbruck, to which organization he represented himself as a victim of American-Hungarian persecution because of his anti-Soviet activities. Several attempts were made by the USFA in Austria to have subject returned to American custody and assurances were given by the French that he would be returned. However, subject eventually was permitted to escape to Italy.

-1-

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2008

SECRET

3. In August 1946, there was founded at Innsbruck the "Hungarian Popular Front" organization, composed of General FARKAS, Jozsef NYIRO, Count Mihaly TELEKY, Lajos LIPTAY, Elemer KORANI, and subject. This group was officially admitted into the "INTERMARIUM", an anti-Soviet organization composed of various emigre Eastern European and Russian groups. In June 1946 subject had gone clandestinely to Northern Italy, still working for the French Service, and by September 1946 he was in Rome. There he claimed to be a Habsburg follower and boasted of his contact with De GAULLE. From Rome he made at least one trip to Paris where it was reported he conferred with De GAULLE on behalf of the Hungarian Rightists. He had several contacts in the Vatican, including Msgr. Zoltan NYISTOR, head of the Vatican Press Office. During this period subject was briefly in Allied custody.

4. In Madrid in February 1947, subject approached the Spanish Foreign Office with the claim that he represented the anti-Soviet movement "INTERMARIUM", which, he stated, was to provide an army to fight with British and French forces against the USSR. The Spanish Foreign Office approved his plans and put him in contact with the Cardinal Primate of Spain, the Archbishop of Toledo, who was to assist him financially. Subject's ostensible mission in Madrid was to handle Hungarian refugee matters. He apparently had a large sum of money at his disposal which, reportedly, originated with the Vatican.

5. Returning to Rome about March 1947, subject became increasingly active in Hungarian affairs. He was in touch with Father Tibor GALLUS, acting head of Hungarian relief at the Vatican, and was also in touch with the "INTERMARIUM" organization. He branched out into business by establishing a tile factory, purchasing a restaurant, and also wrote a book entitled "Save Hungary". In his writing, etc., he bitterly criticized American policy in Austria and Germany.

6. Early in 1947 the Czechoslovakian Government through the Warsaw Polish Embassy in Rome, presented a demand for subject's arrest and extradition. This demand passed through Italian ministerial channels and resulted in subject's arrest. INSABATO, an Italian agrarian expert who had known subject in Geneva during the League of Nations period, appealed in conjunction with PECORARI to the Italian Chief of Police FERRARI for subject's release. FERRARI ordered subject's release but did not revoke the order for his arrest. Subject was told by the Italians to "disappear" upon his release. INSABATO gave him shelter in his home for a few days and PECORARI arranged to have him taken to a Florentine convent, according to one report. Another report stated that subject had been hidden by the Jesuits until his papers could be recovered from the Italian police. On 1 September 1947, the Italian Foreign Ministry issued an extradition order against subject; however, an American CIC officer, acting in unofficial capacity, assisted subject in escaping on the S.S. "Ciudad de Valencia" sailing from Genoa to Barcelona. Subject arrived in Madrid on 25 September 1947.

SECRET

7. While in Rome, subject had attempted to form an organization to be known as the "Unione Continentale" or "Center of Studies for the Balkans and Central Europe". This organization was to serve as a collecting point for anti-communist emigre elements and would incidentally, compete with and eventually replace "INTERMARITUM". During the summer of 1947, subject wrote and had published a book entitled "La Confederazione Dambiana", wherein he reportedly expressed the ideas motivating his post-war activity. According to his own statements, the British and French have offered subject assignments in the "Europa Union", an organization sponsored by those two countries. He claims to have refused the offers.

8. Subject is married for the second time and has one child, a son of eight years.

[ ]  
ROBERT A. SCHOW  
Assistant Director  
Special Operations